

2nd CIA choice better than 1st

By nominating Adm. Stansfield Turner as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, President Carter apparently has avoided the kind of opposition that scuttled his first choice for the job, Theodore C. Sorensen.

Turner is a professional military man with a brilliant academic and Navy record and a reputation as an outstanding military analyst. He attended Amherst College, graduated 25th in his class at Annapolis, where he was a classmate of President Carter, and won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford, where he studied philosophy, politics and economics and received a master's degree in 1950.

Sorensen, on the other hand, was criticized because of his liberal, intellectual background; his status as a conscientious objector in World War II; his use of classified documents in writing his book on the late President Kennedy, and his assistance to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy in what was widely regarded as the Chappaquiddick coverup.

But Turner also has had the experience of command, as president of the U.S. Naval War College from 1972 to 1974, as commander of the Second Fleet in 1974 and as commander-in-chief of allied forces in southern Europe since August, 1975.

So far as is known, Turner has not expressed

any public views about the need for tighter control of CIA covert operations or the prevention of any repetition of past abuses. But his record indicates he is a quick learner who insists on getting to the heart of problems at the start of any assignment. He also is known to be a hard worker and bright, breezy and tough.

In a thoughtful article in the January issue of Foreign Affairs quarterly, Turner defined U.S. naval capabilities in the light of two crisscrossing trends: the Soviet Union's naval buildup and the growing competition for U.S. military expenditures from social demands on our national resources.

In assessing the naval balance, Turner wrote, "A sensible approach will be to ask not, 'Who is ahead?' but to determine whether our naval forces in hand, considering the other forces on the planet, can carry out our national purpose — which is principally to keep the peace if we can, and if we cannot, to protect ourselves from storms, and to help our friends to protect themselves."

That sounds like a sensible approach to apply not just to the Navy but also to the more general problems of national security, which will be Turner's task as the CIA director.